the border. With the breakup of Chin ended any semblance of that league and that principle of hegemony by which a measure of respect had been paid to the rights of the individual states and some protection given them. Heretofore, as we have seen, war between the feudal states had been carried on in large part according to recognized rules. Moreover, in theory it did not have as an aim the extinction of the enemy or even the annihilation of his army, but the punishment of the guilty and the giving effect to the judgments of Heaven. Now, war became a business. Military oiganization and technique were altered and became more efficient. The contest was one for the survival of the fittest. The strong ruthlessly overran and absorbed the weak. Some of the members^ of the old aristocratic houses sank to the level of the common people and many new families rose to power.

The principal combatants were the great principalities on the frontier, Ch'in, Ch'u, Yen (with its capital on the site of the present Peiping), the three fragments of Chin, and a revived Ch'L These were known as the *Ck'i Hsiung,* or Seven Martial (States). Ch'i had not been a major figure in Chinese politics for about two centuries, but it had continued to exist, and, under the leadership of a usurping ruling house—regarded disapprovingly by scholars who favored legitimacy—it rose once more to prominence. However, Ch'in and Ch'u, with a much stronger admixture of non-Chinese blood and culture, were the chief rivals. Both were expanding at the expense of their neighbors. In the fourth century B.C., Ch'in conquered the state of Shu, in the present province of Szechwan—a section which now begins to have a part in Chinese history. In that same century Ch'u overthrew Yiieh and absorbed

the northern portions of its dominions—those formerly belonging to Wu. As between Ch'u and Ch'in, the tide of fortune ebbed and flowed. Alliances centering around each were made and dissolved, the lesser states seeking safety or aggrandizement by throwing in their fortunes now with one and now with another of the more formidable combatants.

Ch'in owed much of its strength to Kung-sun Yang, also called Wei Yang or Shang Yang, who, belonging to the ruling family of Wei, in the middle of the fourth century, under Duke Hsiao—who appears to have combined ability with an ambition to control all China—became a minister of Ch'in. Under Wei Yang's direction